



Severe Weather Awareness Week March 10-16, 2002

Tornado Safety Tips

As the severe weather season approaches, North Carolina Emergency Management and the National Weather Service want you to be prepared for tornadoes and severe thunderstorms. Take some time during tornado safety week to make a tornado plan for your family, friends and co-workers. Planning ahead will lower the chance of injury or even death in the event a tornado strikes.

Tornadoes can occur with little or no warning. You may have only a minute's time to make life-or-death decisions. It is important to know the basics of tornado safety so that you can survive should one strike.

- ☛ ☛ Listen to the local radio, local television, The Weather Channel or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) weather radio for information.
- ☛ ☛ Don't wait until a warning is issued to begin planning how you will respond. Take responsibility for your safety and plan now.
- ☛ ☛ Have a plan. Meet with household members to discuss how to respond to an approaching tornado. Hold tornado drills. Learn how to turn off the water, gas and electricity at the main switches.
- ☛ ☛ The safest place to be during a tornado is underground in a basement or storm cellar. If you have no basement, go to an interior hallway or smaller interior room without windows, such as a bathroom or closet. Go to the center of the room. Get under something sturdy such as a table. Curl up in a ball using your hands and arms to protect your head and neck.
- ☛ ☛ Mobile homes are particularly vulnerable to damage from high winds. Residents, even those who live in mobile homes with tie-downs, should seek safe shelter when a tornado threatens. Go to a prearranged shelter when the weather turns bad. If you live in a mobile home park, talk to management about the availability of a nearby shelter. If no shelter is available, go outside and lie on the ground, if possible in a ditch or depression. Use your arms to protect your head and neck and wait for the storm to pass. While waiting, be alert for the flash floods that sometimes accompany tornadoes.
- ☛ ☛ Never try to outrun a tornado in a car. A tornado can toss cars and trucks around like toys. If you see a funnel cloud or hear a tornado warning issued, get out of your vehicle and find safe shelter. If no shelter is available, lie down in a low area using your arms to cover the back of your head and neck. Be sure to stay alert for flooding.
- ☛ ☛ Be alert to what is happening outside. Here are some tornado danger signs:
 - ☛ ☛ If there is a watch or warning posted, falling hail should be considered as a danger sign.
 - ☛ ☛ An approaching cloud of debris can mark the location of a tornado, even if a funnel is not visible.
 - ☛ ☛ Before a tornado hits, the wind may die down and the air may become very still.
 - ☛ ☛ Tornadoes generally occur near the trailing edge of a thunderstorm. It is not uncommon to see clear, sunlit skies behind a tornado.